

A  
S E R M O N  
OF  
NOBILITIE.

Preached at White-hall, be-  
fore the King in February 1606.

By GEORGE MERITON Doctor of Divini-  
ty, one of his Maiesties Chaplaines in Or-  
dinary; and Parson of Hadleigh  
in Suffolke.

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*Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Them that honour  
mee, I will honour: but they which despise mee, shall  
bee despised. 1. Sam. 2. 30.*



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To the Right Noble *Thomas*  
Earle of Suffolke, Barron of Walden, Lord  
Chamberlaine to his Maiesty: One of the most  
Honourable Priuy-Counsell, and Knight of the  
*Noble Order of the Garter, &c. increase of true*  
*honour and euerlasting*  
*happineste,*



*Noble Earle,* vouchsafe  
I beseech you, to  
accept of that *Printed*: which was not  
long since *Preached*. It is a *Ser-*  
*mon of Nobility*: and vnto none  
may it more iustly bee offered,  
then vnto your selfe: whome  
*Nature, Vertue, King, and God,*

A 3

adornes

*The Epistle.*

adornes with eminent Honours.  
It is also a small testimony, of  
my vnfayned duty: who am  
the Son of him, that was once  
your L: poore Tenant: borne  
vnder the roofe of your Honors  
house: and in my youth esteem-  
ing my selfe, as one of yours,  
First affections makes deepe  
impresions: and there-  
fore I shall euer  
remaine

*Your Honors to be  
commanded.*

GEORGE MERITON.





TO THE CHRISTIAN REA-  
ders all Christian Graces.



*Oble or Gentle Readers. I haue  
here published a short Sermon of  
Nobility. It is published: and  
perhaps I was drawne hereunto by  
some authority; or else prouoked  
by much intreaty, if by neyther of  
these: yet know, that it is now a fashion, to preach,  
and then to print. And though I bee but meru in rus,  
a Countrey Minister, I would not bee thought to bee  
worne out of fashion. It is a short Sermon. For it  
was preached, not at the Crosse, but at the Court:  
The one place requiring length, the other expecting  
brevity. It is a Sermon of Nobility. Before Nobles,  
of a noble Argument. Wordes of good worth, if un-  
seasonably uttered, sustaine that reproch which lu-  
das receiued from the Priests and Rulers in Ierusa-  
lem, quid hæc ad nos, what are these to vs? but  
that which is fitly spoken in his time, and place, is,  
saith the Wise-man, Like Apples of Gold, and pic-  
tures of Siluer. Prouerb. 25. 11. Pretious in it selfe,  
and*

To the Reader.

and pleasing unto others. You haue the reason of my  
choise. When it was preached, it found some small fa-  
uour, it was perhaps as a little picture of siluer to  
the Hearers. My hearty desire of the Lord is, that it  
may be to those which read it, profitable. euen as pre-  
cious as an Apple of Gold. 7 thus I commend  
you unto him, who giueth unto his,  
Grace and Glory.

Hadleigh: Suffolke.

Yours in CHRIST IESVS.

G: M.



## A SERMON of Nobility.

*These were also more noble men, then those of  
Thessalonica; which receiued the word with  
all readinesse: and searched the Scriptures  
dayly, whether those things were so.*

Acts the 17. Chapter, and 11. Verse.



Here bee two things  
which do preferue the  
life of mā, *ἀρτος καὶ λόγος*  
*Bread*, and the *Word* of  
GOD: Man shall not  
liue by *Bread* alone,  
but by euery *Word* that  
proceedeth out of the  
mouth of GOD, *Deut.* the eight Chapter,  
and the third verse, both are necessary, and

B

yet

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yet as Iohn sayd of CHRIST, Iohn the first Chapter, and 15. verse, *He that commeth after me, is preferred before me*, so must wee thinke of these two, (howsoeuer the account of the world be otherwise) that the *latter* is farre the *better*. Martha did *well*, in making prouision for the foode of the *body*: but Mary did much *better*, who receiued from Christs mouth the foode of her *soule*: The *one*, it is but the *staffe of life* *martall*: *Leuit. the 26.* the *other*, the *seed of immortality*, the first of Peter and the first Chapter, and *powerfull to saluation, vnto all beleeuers*, *Rom. the 1. Chapter, and 16. verse.* From the *former*, vpon a *fullnesse*, we ought to forbear: *for the fullnesse of bread, was a sinne of Sodom*, *Ezek. the 16. Chapter:* but of the *latter*, there is neuer ynough; *thy belly shall eate it*, sayeth GOD, *and thy bowels shall be filled with it*, *Ezek. the third Chapter, and third verse.* In this Chapter I meete with two sorts of men: The first are certaine troublesome Iewes of *Thessalonica*, which (like worldly men) saueour *bread*, the things of this world, more then the things of GOD. The second, are a company of honorable men of *Berea*, more honorable then those of *Thessalonica*, who iudge rightly of  
the

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the word of GOD, and shew their loue vnto it, by a ready receiuing, and dayly searching. The meeting of these noble Gentlemen is profitable vnto vs, yeelding by their presence and practise a threefold instruction. First, that there are Nobles: (*These were noble men.*) Secondly, that there are differences, or degrees, of nobility. (*These were more noble men then those of Thessalonica.*) Thirdly, that they haue, and are knowne by their fruites, (*They receiued the word readily, they searched it dayly, &c.*) A Treatise of Nobility, (if I erre not in conceipt) will not be vnprofitable to such as are *yong Nobles*, who may hereby be more stirred vp to propagate and inlarge the same: will not be distastfull to *old Nobles*, who seeing the seed, and true forme of Nobility shining in themselves, may behold with a glad heart the fruit of it in their posterity: neither will it be vsfitting *ingenuous men*: for Nobility, and the condition of all such kind of persons are by a happy knot conioyned together. Heare therefore with patience most honorable, and ingenuous, *Et Deus faxit argumentum hoc, tam sit commodum, quam est accommodum*, and GOD make this argument as profitable vnto

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you, as it is fit and sutable for you.

There be Nobles. *These were Noble men.* Stoicks the old brokers of parity, and their successors the English Switzers of these our dayes, supposing *Nobility* to be but a meere fiction, or device of men in higher place, haue made a foolish doubt, whether there be such a thing in the world or no? Let vs indure awhile to heare them to speake: *Nature (say they) is an equal parent vnto all, a step-mother vnto none: God made but one Adam, not one of sauer to be the father of Nobles, and another of earth to beget the common sort: none are barred of their way to vertue, or hindered of their course to true felicity. Not Scythia, or any other region vnder heauen doth hurt the minde, neither is one kindred to be accounted more auncient then another: God tooke his first King from seeking of Asses, and his second from following the Sheepe great with young: to set up pictures in Galleries, and the names of Families in a long row, with Coates, and Crests. Notos magis facit quam nobiles, doth giue knowledge of men, but no honour vnto them: the flower and the branne comes both out of the same roote: and euery man in himselfe is but as a figure of 1. giue him riches there is a cipher*

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*cipher 0. then may he stand for tenne: giue him riches and authority, there be two ciphers 00. then may he stand for a hundred: adde fauour of his Prince, there is a third cipher 0 then may he stand for a thousand: Thus euery man in himselfe is but as a figure of 1: distinguished only by empty ciphers. No more for shame. Me thinks I heare either the prophecy of Esay fulfilled in his third Chapter and 5. verse, That the vile should presume against the Honorable. Or else as Esdras speaketh in his first booke and 3. Chapter, that they be the words of men in wine, who neither remember their King, nor their Gouvernours. Did but reason instruct, or common experience rule these fellows, they would abhorre their tongues as blabbs of their owne basenesse. In mettals of the same kinde (which Plato resembleth vnto the soules of men) some are found to be purer then others. In Plants there is a great difference of seeds and branches. In Cattail there appeareth no small force of the breede. So is it amongst Men (for in these things we are like to other creatures) it auayleth much from what stock one descendeth. I confesse that Aurelius was vn-happie vnto Roome in nothing, sed quia ge-*

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*nuit*, but in *Commodus* his incommodious  
sonne. That amongst the Kings of *Iuda* for  
the most part good Fathers had bad Chil-  
dren : *Ne virtus videretur esse hereditaria*,  
that vertue might not seeme to come by in-  
heritance. And bad Fathers begat good : *Ne*  
*vitium esset infinitum*, least vices should ex-  
ceede aboue measure. Yet for all this *com-*  
*monly* it commeth to passe, that inclinations  
of minds do follow the originals and dispo-  
sitions of bodyes : and the Poet *Horace* sayth  
truly, *Est in iuuenis, est in equis patrum vir-*  
*tus &c. Fortes creantur fortibus & bonis*. As  
the matter is affected whereof we are moul-  
ded, so groweth there (*euen in nature*) di-  
uers and distinct differences betwixt vs :  
some are noble, some ignoble, some ingenu-  
ous, some base : some quick of apprehension,  
some dull : some fit to rule, some to serue.  
Neither is this repugnant vnto the lawe of  
*Nature* who although she hath made those  
things which are *Necessary* ; *common* to all :  
yet out of the *variety* of those which receiue  
them, caused by *Private* beginning, and *opi-*  
*nionate* matter, doth there arise diuerse con-  
ditions of *Singulers* and manyfold dispositi-  
ons, and affections of men . If children of



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ten times, carry the markes of their fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers, in there bodies: may we not iudge, that they retaine in there minds, the propensions, inclinations, and as it were the sparkes of there auncestors? Which if it *sometimes* hapneth other wise, yet in a dubble respect that matters not: first, Because *that* is to bee considered, which commeth to passe *often*, not which seldom chaunceth; *Nature* being wont, for the *Most part* to obserue her lawes. Secondly because it must be graunted, that education, discipline, and vsage, are very forcible, to the informing of manners, and confirming of habits: which we doe not say, doe of *Necessity* follow the bodies temperature: and yet againe it may not be denied, but that the pure naturalls in some, are better then in others, for the procreation of morall, or ciuill vertues the region where we liue: our behaiour in our youth or kinds of life; of diet: of affections of minds, and differences of such like thinges produce a variety of *Next* causes: and then a conclusion in *Reason* and *experience* is this; That from hence must arise, a diuersity of effects. It is not *Reason* nor *experience* alone which pleades. In this cause

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*ea* coming to his farme and seeing his  
 house which he had builded, decayed, a tree  
 which he had planted, rotten: a boy which  
 hee had brought vp, now with a gray head:  
 saith thus to him selfe. *Quocunque oculos con-*  
*uerto, video documenta mea etatis.* I find do-  
 cuments of my age on euery side, To like  
 effect may I speake in this case of nobility.  
*Quocunque oculos conuerto video argumenta*  
*vera nobilitatis.* Reason instructeth, Experience  
 teacheth: behold I am coōpassed with a cloud  
 of honorable wittnesses. King, Prince, Nobles  
 are present; besides all these, *Divine writ* doth  
 warrant the same. In the sixt of *Ezech.* and  
 the third verse *GOD speaketh to mountaines*  
*hills, rockes,* and *vallies,* and vnder these, to  
 men of diuerse ranckes: to *vallies,* to com-  
 mon people: *To rockes:* to soldiers, *To hills,* to  
 gentlemen, *To mountaines,* to nobles. *Abra-*  
*hams* posterity were of two sorts, *I will mul-*  
*tify thee as the dust of the earth.* Here is an ob-  
 scure and a dusty generation, *I will make thy*  
*seed as the starrs of heauen,* here be true *No-*  
*bles,* like starrs, shining, and growing light vn-  
 to the world. These in the first of *Num.* and  
 the sixteene, are called *the famous in the con-*  
*gregation.* in the second of *Samuel* the 23. and  
 23. verse,

for Rivers  
 Hier. reads  
 Rocks,

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23. verse *the worthyes of the land*, in the 5. of *Esay* and 13. *the glory of the Kingdome*: in the *Epist. of Iude* the 8. verse: *Dignity, Glories, or Maiesities* in the 26. of *Ezek.* and 11. verse. *The strength of Israel.* Hath God giuē these names to things which haue no being? it was one of the high degrees of misery in *Iudaths captiuitie*, to haue her Nobles slaine: *Jeremy* the 39. And *Paule* in the 1. to the *Corin.* the 1. and 26. speaking of bad ones, tells vs heauy newes, *That not many Nobles are called*; here are many but not many called. To hold any longer a Taper to the Sunne, were but a poynt of follic: my text is cleare: *These were Noble men.*

There be diffierences or degrees of Nobility. *These were (More) noble men, then those of Theſſalonica* The Kinds of nobility are foure: One is by nature, an other by riches or (as we say), of fortune, a third Morall, a fourth Diuine, first, that by Nature is by *Aristotle* in his politiques thus defined.

I ascribe nothing to Fortune though I will vse the word.

*Est virtus Generis, et alicuius familia congruens quedam facultas procreandi viros ingenuos, et ad virtutem faciles, successionē confirmata.* It is a power incident vnto a stocke, or a certayne congruent ability, of a house or famely, to beget an ingenuous progeny, apt

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to imbrace honorable vertues, and confirmed by succession. This *Kind* then, is not so much in one *indiuidual* to be considered, as in a *continued race* or *line of many*; and such is the nature of it, as that it may, and is many times, retayned without the other *three*, it is not impossible to bee *Noble by birth*, and thereby proclive to honest, and honorable designs, and yet bad education, to fall to vice, and thereby become voyd of *Morall and deuine nobility*: yea and some times of that also which cometh by *Fortune*. Such as be vicious staine the noblenes of their houses, yet doe they not altogether extinguish there *Nobility*, because being noble by *Nature*, still they retaine a power, to beget others which are proclive to morall honesty. For as *Laban* will either be a *Laban*, or a *Nabal*, or *Nabal* either a *Nabal*, or a *Laban*, turne them backwards, and forwards they will remaine rude rustickes, ether a foolish clowne, as *Nabal*, or a frowning clowne, as *Laban*, for *Mercury* cannot be carued out of euery blocke. So is it with *Nobility by birth*, it will not soone degenerate: as one man cannot well be sayd to get it vnto his stocke, so beeing once gotten, it cannot be ouerthrowne  
or

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or lost, by the wicked life of one. Now as on the one side, *Vice* doth greatly blemish it, so on the other, *Virtue* in a *Noble* personage by *nature* is farre more excellent and worthier estimation, then in a man by birth *ignoble*: for in him, it is more firme, and constant, more deeply rooted, and as it were wreathed, and strengthened with the virtues of his Auncestors, so as by a kind of necessity, he is constrained to tread in their steps: yet in *this*, is virtue more admirable, more properly his, and formed in him with greater difficultie.

The second kind is an externall shape of *Nobility*, shining in *the goods of Fortune*, which doth dazle and deceiue the eyes of common men: whence it was that *Simonides* accounted those to be *Noble*, which were descended in a long course of time, from wealthy Progenitors. This is not opposite vnto vice, as the truest Nobility is, for *dinites in arca*, may be *pauperes in conscientia*, rich men in cofers, poore men in conscience: and though *Dives seculi*, was *Discipulus Christi*, *Ioseph of Arimathea*, a disciple of Christ, yet corpulent birds cannot flye high. Hee that is superfluously rich, *currit ad libitum*,

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*ex corrui ad illicitum*, sayth *Bernard*: wealth and wickednes, are seldome while at oddes, whereupon it was not sayd amisse, That the riches of *Midas* were not more noble, then the pouerty of *Aristides*, and yet are riches also reckoned a part of Nobility. First, because they make it popular. Secondly, for that they be the instruments by which vertues are, or may be attayned. Lastly, because (beeing attayned) they likewise serue as meanes whereby those vertues by actions do manifest themselves.

3

The thurd kind is *morall*, which is nothing else but a composition of manners confirmed by the habits of vertues, which also may be called the *nobility of the mind*. This dependeth on our owne industry and induours, being most proper vnto those which haue it, because they be the first founders or authors of the same: and it is not so ioynd to that *by birth*, but that it may be separated. In the eight Chapter of *Iohn*, Christ calleth the wicked Iewes the sonnes of the Deuill, there was in them then no *morall* noblenes, and yet by *nature* were they descended from honorable *Abraham*: the worst of them could say, we haue *Abraham* to our father. With this kind haue there been some  
so

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So farre in loue, as that more out of affection then iudgement, they haue pronounced, *Nobilitas sola est animus quæ moribus ornat*, that the *Morall* is the *Totall*; the *Soule*, the *Sole* Nobility. I know it little benefits a Riuer to come from a cleare Spring, if it selfe be muddy, that *Esops* Iay did boast of other birds feathers; that it smally profiteth a blind man to say that his Parents could see; or a feeble man, that his Auncestors did wastle for the Garland in *Olympus*. Such as couer to excell in Honour, must labour to exceed in Vertue. *Magna hæc est*, great surely is this kind, *sed non sola*, but not the onely kinde; in the opinion of many like *Abisbas* amongst *Dauids* Worthies, who had the name amongst *three*, the second of *Samuel* the 23. Chapter, and let it (*for me*) beare the bell amongst the *former*, yet must it yeeld to the fourth, which is the last: *Diuine or Christian Nobleneſſe*, in compariſon of this, that other is at the *moſt*, but as *Ioseph* to *Pharao*, the *second* in the kingdome.

*Diuine Nobility*: It is an eleuation of our degree, or nature vnto G O D, a comming vnto him, a conformity with him: the top of this kindred is G O D himſelfe, and then



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doth it most appeare in vs, when neglecting mortall things we aspire vnto heavenly, imitating herein our holy predecessors the spirits and soules of the righteous, striving to liue as they do, fearing to degenerate from them, and euer remembring with *S. Paul Philippians* the 3. Chapter, and 20. verse, that our *modus viuendi, our conuersation be in heauen.*

There are then (you see) foure kinds of Nobility, first, *externall* by riches, secondly, *internall* by vertue, thirdly, *naturall* by birth, fourthly *supernaturall* by grace.

*Externall, or purse Nobility*, though it glittereth in the face of the world, yet is it but seated in the hands of Fortune, *qua vitrea est* sayth *Seneca*, a very brittle *Shee*-friend, sitting vpon an vnconstant wheele, and pictured by the Poets with a double face, *white* before, but *black* behind: her riches are runnagates (*uncertaine*) sayth the Apostle *Paul* in the first to *Timothie* the sixt Chapter, and 17. verse, like euill Seruants, who loue often to shift their Masters. *Iob* that could say *Dominus dedit, the LORD hath given*, in the same verse also sayd, *Dominus abstulit, the LORD hath taken away*. The whole world is alwayes in motion, and delighteth



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reth in change ; the heauen hath not one face long ; the earth hath foure coates in the yeare, and the estates of the richest are very sickle ; as a blasing starre, to night appearing, to morrow gonne ; as an Actor on the stage, sometimes a great personage, sometimes a poore peasant : as swans neasts in the water : *errantes in sule*, wandering Islands : yea the mighty potentates of the world are but *Ludibria fortuna*, Fortunes scorne. *Haman* to day highly honored in the Court at *Shushan*, the next day hanged vpō as high a gibbet : *Gelinus* a puissant Prince of the *Vandalls*, but brought so low within a while, as he was inforced to request a loafe of bread, to slake his hunger ; a *Procopius*, sponge to drye vp his teares, and a harpe, to solace him in his exceeding misery. *Bellisarius*, in his time the only man liuing, but hauing his eyes put out, he was at last led in a string to begg ; crying : *Date obolum Bellisario*. *Henry* the fourth a ritch and victorious Emperour who had fought 52. pitched feilds, yet in his old age driuen to that exigent, as he became a suter for a poore prebend in the church of *Spire*, to maintaine him-selfe. Thus do men totter as it were vpon the ridge of a waue, and are turned (as we say) vpon

*Fortunes*

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*Fortunes* wheele. And therefore such as *onely* strue thus to *Ennoble* them-selues, doe fully resemble those *Arcadians & Romans*; who (as *Phutarch* saith did weare the *Piſture of the Moone* vpon there shooes, to tell them that as there *Nobility* did increaſe, ſo would it decreaſe againe, and ſoone be ecclipſed. *Nobility* *internall*; (ſo much applauded; as if *Noblenes* were nothing els, but a famely beautified, with the beſt vertues,) is but a habite, gotten by uſe, powerfull (in ſome meaſure) to perſorme morall a ctions: *ſtudy, care, diligence, right, conſultation, fit pre-eleſtion*, are the beſt fountaines from whence it doeth ſpring, the beauty of it, conſiſteth in *Action*, and the teſtimony of it is but *out ward Honour*.

Bona ſtirps  
bona propa-  
go.

*Nobility by birth*, that *improves* as the *Grecians* called it, hath but a weake foundation; the *temperature & right conſtitution of Mortal* bodyes, whereby *Some* menne are made *Onely procline*, to honorable a ctions; and haue a faculty to procreate others, with *ſparkes of honour*, like to them-selues: And ſuch are the ruins of time, as there remaines not ſo much as foote-ſtepps of many auncient famelies: (To omit hom-bread exam-  
ples.) The *Iulij, Fabij, Metelli*, are ſo buried;

as

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as he that now should but say hee descended  
of them: would be mockt and hooted at, as  
if he had told a dreame of *Pythagoras*. Onely  
*Christian Nobility* is best which admits of  
noe exception: in regarde whereof all the  
rest are but *shadows*, and *shapes* of noblenes:  
for in *CHRIST IESVS* saith Saint Paule  
*Gala.* the sixt and fifteene *(neither circumcision*  
*availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a*  
*new creature (Not Circumcision)* not the prehe-  
minence of the lewe; which was much every  
way *Rom.* the third and first, for so them apper-  
tayned the adoption and the glory and the con-  
nants, and the giuing of the lawe, and the service  
of *G O D*, and the promises: *Rom.* the ninth  
and fourth verse. Not *Uncircumcision*, not the  
honour of the Gentiles, with, al their wealth,  
wisdome, pollicies, pedegrees, and whatso-  
euer is of high account, and glorious in the  
eyes of the world. All priuiledges, all prerog-  
atiues, all dignities, all regalities; they must  
sloope, and lie downe, at the feete of a *new*  
*creature. Paul* (whilest he was a *lewe*;) was  
a citizen of *Rome*, a *Pharisy*, a great *Rabby*, in-  
structed at the feete of *Gamaliel*, of the tribe  
of *Beniamine*, circumcised the eight daye:  
after his conuersion, (being a christian) he

D

was

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was an *Apoſtle*, taken vp into the third heaue;  
 &c. yet all theſe things, did he thinke, but as  
 loſſe, and doing in reſpect of his being a *new*  
*creature* in CHRIST IEſVS. This indeed  
 is the ornament of the bloud, the beſt part of  
 Noblemens ſcutchions, the fineſt flower in  
 their garlands, and be they of neuer ſo great  
 an eſtate and want this they are but *transitory*  
 wretched and vile and miſerable; *Apo.* the 3.  
 and ſeuenteene. To haue *wiſdom*, *wealth*,  
*ſtrength*, *beauty*, is in compariſon nothing:  
 firſt *Cor.* the firſt: and 15. 26. 27. verſes.  
 To be *King*, or *Keſar*: is in compariſon, no  
 thing: for the *King* may not liſt vp his mind,  
 aboue his bretheren. *Deutra*: the 17. and 20.  
 ver & *Cæſares eſſent Chriſtiani ſi Cæſares non*  
*eſſent ſecula neceſſarij aut ſi Chriſtiani potueſſint*  
*eſſe Cæſares*, ſaith *Tertulian*, of the *Cæſars*.  
 To be the *Mother* or *Brother* of CHRIST, is  
 in compariſon nothing, for if theſe had not  
 been allyed vnto him by ſpiritual adoption,  
 as well as by natural propagation, they could  
 not haue been ſaued; *Luke* the 11. Chapter,  
 and 27. verſe, and *Mark* the third Chapter,  
 the 33. and 35. verſes. Only a *new creature*  
 ſhall ſtand, when all things elſe ſhall faile,  
 and then are we truly honorable, when our

pedi-

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pedigree runneth vpwards with Christs (in the third of *Luke*) to this height, *Which is the Sonne of Adam, which is the Sonne of God.* I call not heere a Christian Noble: *A new creature*, as if he lately came out of *Affrica*, or had neuer been heard of in the world before: for (as *Bildad* speaketh in the 8. of *Iob*) *these are not men of yesterday*: Though the name of *Christian* began first to be published at *Antioch*, yet before *Christ* was borne, was this broode honorable. Who can exclude *Moses* from it, who preferred the reproch of *Christ* before the Court of *Pharao*? Or *Iacob*, who beheld *Christ* leaning on the top of the ladder, and did him reuerence? Or *Abraham*, who saw the day of *Christ*, and reioyced exceedingly? These (and many more) were all noble Christians, indued with *Christs* spirit, and yeelding seruice vnto him, so that some went before, and some followed after, but the song of all was one, *Hosanna in the highest*. The worth and dignity of Christian Nobility consisteth in this, that it maketh the *Sonnes of men the Sonnes of God*, not by the grace of *Creation*, as *Adam* was in his innocency, nor by the grace of *personall union*, as *Christ* is in his manhood,

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but by the *grace of adoption*, whereby we cry Abba Father, the acts whereof is double, 1. *acceptation*, 2. *regeneration*: by the *former*, we are *all equall* to those which are the *best*: by the *latter*, we are made not Sonnes *more* then others, but yet *better* Sonnes of God. And then are these *Nobles borne*, when the Sonne of righteousnes ariseth in their soules, enlightning their minds, and offering vnto their inward views the iudgements of God for sinne, *hic dolor est partus*, this is the paine of their birth, *hac vespera est* sayth Barnard, this is the sorrow of the euening, & *neccessesse est addi matutinam letitiam*, and for a full deliuerance, the gladnesse of the morning must be added, a sweet excusing ioy of conscience, 2. *letitia*, that is a *latitia*, which maketh the heart farre more wider then the mouth, and thus is their *birth consummate*, when *euening* and *morning* are made *one day*. As they haue a *birth*, so haue they also a *growing*: they increase in yeares, and with yeares grow in fauour both with God, and Man, let Iohn the Baptist, who was not only in high esteeme amongst the people, *sed magnus coram Domino*, Luke the first Chapter, but *great likewise in the sight of God*, deriuing not onely their

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their *descent* from the King of glory, but ha-  
uing also this King their *most loving Father*,  
being all *Kings sonnes*, and *beloued of their*  
*Father*, all *Brothers to Christ*, the first borne  
among many brethren, all *yonger brothers*  
*indeed*, but (which is wonderfull) all *Princes*  
*apparant*, *Reuelat.* the fifth Chapter and the  
tenth verse: and that to Crownes incompa-  
rably pretious, both for their valew, for *they*  
*are Crownes of life*, *Timoth.* the 2. Chapter,  
and 4. verse: and also for their glory, for  
*they are incorruptible Crownes of glory*, *Peter*  
the first, and 5. Chapter and 4. verse. Ha-  
uing yet further the *Holy Ghost* for their vn-  
speakeable comforter; dwelling in them,  
speaking to them, praying with them, and  
crying for them, with sighes, and grones,  
which cannot be expressed: whose *garments*  
are the vnstained roabes of their Sauours  
righteousnes, whose *Chayne*, is the golden  
Chayne of their saluation, the links where-  
of are described *Rom.* the 8. Chapter and 24.  
verse: whose *good cognoscence* is a good con-  
science, whose *signet* is the spirit, pledging  
and sealing vp their hearts to the assurance  
of life, whose *Jewels and ornaments* are the  
graces of that spirit, as ioy, peace, humility,

ly: and 364 10



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faith, loue, hope, patience, &c. whose *diet*, more choise then Manna, is that liuing bread which came downe from Heauen, whose *vassals* are all the creatures, and whose *attendants* are the Angels, pitching themselues round about them, *Psal.* 34. and verse 7. ministring vnto them: ministring vnto them for their good: for the good of their saluation, *Hebr.* the first Chapter and 14. verse. These be those vnto whom G O D beareth an especiall affection, whom he hath *elect*ed before the world, *called* out of the world, *iustified* in the world, and whom he will *glorifie* in the world to come. Tell me now, is it not the greatest honour to be a true *Christian Noble*? What shall be done vnto the *man whom the King will honour*? the question is answered in the 6. Chapter of *Hester*, Hee shall be arrayed with royall attire, with the Kings ring on his hand, his princely diademe set vpon his head, and withall a Proclamation shall be published, *The Viceroy in the kingdom*. Heere be singuler aduancements, yet the *highest* of these is farre inferior to the *least* and *lowest*, which G O D bestoweth vpon *true Christian Nobles*. Our honours, are of a higher strayne, darkening the royalties



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alties of the world, as the Sunne obscureth the light of lesser Starres. It was a high step of earthly honour to which *Moses* was mounted, when he was called *The Sonne of Pharaoes Daughter*: doubtlesse it is a great blessing of *G O D*, to bee borne of any honorable parents; the Sonne of *G O D*, though hee came poore into the world, yet would hee not descend of an ignoble stocke, and *Paul*, in the Epistle to the *Romans* when hee would magnifie the dignity of *CHRIST* in both natures, saith of him, that he came of *The lineage of Dauid*, according to the flesh; Nobility, it is in earth the image and splendor, of *G O D*s diuinity. O what is then *Christian Noblenes*? how matchlesse a blessing is it, to be allyed vnto diuine nature? to call the *high G O D of heauen*, our father? was it such an honour, that *Dauid* should become the Sonne of *Saule a wicked King of Israell*? and can it seeme a smale thing, to become the Sonnes, of the *holy one, the G O D of Israell*? O behold, what loue the father beareth vs, that we should be called, not *seruants* any more but *friends*, *Iohn* the 15. and 15. verse Nay more, the Sonnes of *G O D* not so much *the Sonnes of Men*, as the Sonnes of *G O D*

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GOD. It was not our birth day, when wee *first* saw light, and were borne into the world but when GODS countenance did *first* shine vpon vs, when saluation in CHRIST IESVS, was offered vnto vs. The *Gratian* virgins reckoned their age, from their marriage, saith *Homer*, and then began Christians to liue, when *first* we are espoused vnto our husband CHRIST. Let other men therefore, shew the images of their *Ancestors*, let them fetch their pedigree from *Hercules*, or if they thinke it so fit, let them deriue themselues from *Iupiter*, so as we may haue this honour of the Saints, to call the *immortall* GOD our Father, so as we may say: *Our Father which art in heauen*. Which we may boldly do, if we feele the power of the spirit within vs, if GOD hath anoynted vs with the oyle of gladnes aboue others, if wee haue our partes in *Divine Nobility*.

Nobility hath and is knowne by fruits. *They receiued the word readely, they serched it dayly. &c.*

I may not belong in measuring out of *frutes*: to prescribe in this poynte, were with doting *Phormio*, to entreat of warfare before Captaine *Haniball*, in generall therefore a  
word,

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word, or two for the finishing of my text.

*Nobles*, may not resemble the *Noblest trees* such as were consecrated to the *Heathenish Gods*: for they for the most part, were *either barren*, or without *good fruit* as the *Oke*, the *Beech*, the *laurell*, the *mistle*. They may not be like *Beastes*, wherof the *Noblest*, are the *cruelest*: nether are these the *vertues of Noble men*, to dice well, to drinke well, to waste lauishly, to wanton it veneriously; to forget that they were euer borne, or that they shall euer die: say not wee haue *Abraham* to our father: stand not so much vpon the bloud you haue; as vpon the good you doe: *frutes* you must bring forth, & *good ones too*: euery tree that bringeth not forth *good fruit*, is hewen downe and cast into the fire. Luke the 3. *there is danger els vnto your selues*: and the seed of the wicked shall not be renowned for euer. *Esay*. the 14. and 20. verse, *here is Daunger els vnto your progenie*. A-gaine to whom much is giuen, much is of the required, where the Lord soweth liberally, there he expecteth a plentiful crop; and the better the *frutes* are, the more they argue a true Nobility. *Iustice, Wisdom, bounty, Magnificence, greatnes of mind*, teene in imminent daungers; *fortitude, gentlenes & clemency* with ma-

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ny such like; are *good fruits common* to all the *kinds* by which they are made profitable not to them-selues alone; but do shine as stars, & are helpfull vnto others. And hence it cometh to passe that euen by instinct of nature, we doe willingly obey a generous and noble personage; this caused the sheeheardes to yeeld obedience vnto *Romulus*, though brought vp as a sheeheard amongst them: they beheld in him a noble spirit, & notable vertues, directed not so much to *priuat* as to *publike* good. There is a question moued by a Philosopher of our age, concerning men, being *noble by Nature, and quality of mind*, yet oppressed with *poverty*, and hauing the world to frowne vpon them, what calling they may choose, and life professe wherein they may be *fruitfull*? His answer is good, that in noe case they may practise any base, or mechanicall trade, wherein men of low degree may be employed with prayse, and cōmendation; but either (saith he) they must addict them-selues vnto attendance vpo their Prince, in some honorable office: *for the pleasure of a king*, is (not a wealthie) *but in a wise seruant*, *Pro. the 14. and 35.* or they may giue them-selues vnto Chevalry, and leade a martiall life: for it is a peece of happines to

*Piccolominius.*

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a country, (if there can be happines in war) when as Captaines are gentlemen, and gentlemen Captaines, or lastly they may bee *Priests*. I wot well, that this sort of people, for the space of many yeares, haue had little honour by Parliamēt giuen vnto them: except standing by a rogue whilst he is whipt, and keeping a beggars register may be called honour. Yet to be a *Mayor* of a Towne or Citty, or a *Iustice* of Peace in the Countrey (I might goe higher) cannot sort so well with noble estate, as *Priesthood* may: heerein may *Nobles* liue, and deuote them-selues vnto Gods seruice without disparidgement. The Prophet *Samuel* was a *Priest*, a man of God, an *honorable man*, sayth the text the first of *Samuel* and the 9. Chapter. The Patriarks were *Priests* and *Kings* in their families, *Vos genus electum, regale Sacerdotium*, Ye are a chosen generation, a royall *Priesthood*, the first of *Peter* the second Chapter and 9. verse. *Ecce cum regia dignitate Sacer-*  
*dotium copulauit*, *Priesthood* is ioyned with *regalitie*. *Rex non est merè laicus*, a King may  
*Hieron. Basilidon sozer.*  
be a *Priest* without dishonour. Many of your Auncestors (*Right Honorable*) haue liued in this *order*, and thereby not onely retained

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their noblenes, but *amplified* also, and *enlarged* the same: which craueth *vnto vs* the continuance still of a good regard at your Honours hands. What kind of men may better entertaine the word of God, then the Ministers of the word? Who vse more diligently to search the Scriptures, then Ministers, the interpreters of the Scriptures, and yet are these the onely notes whereby the Apostle doth commend vnto vs heere the *most Honorable* men. The fruites then of the *best Nobles* are these, with *readynesse to receiue the word: with diligence to search it.* Two *actions*, to *Receiue: to Search.* Two *conditions*: *readily: dayly:* the obiect of both, *the word of GOD*, the end of both, *to be confirmed in the truth.* Zebedine tells vs of foure fruites whereby true Christian Nobles may bee discerned. *First*, they acknowledge

- 1
- 2 CHRIST to be their Sauiour. *Secondly*, they
- 3 are indued with his spirit. *Thirdly*, they ab-
- 4 horre to serue sinne. *Lastly*, they are strong in faith, all which are couched in the words of my text: for he that *receiueth the word*, must needs acknowledge CHRIST; he that *receiueth it with all readynesse*, hath assuredly his spirit: *he that searcheth the Scriptures day-*

*ly.*

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ly, attendeth not vnto sinne: *he that searcheth* (with these Bareans) *to confirme himseife*, groweth from faith to faith, from strength, to strength, till he commeth to be a perfect man in Christ Iesus. To *receiue the word*, doth not barely signifie, to *take it*, but to *retaine it*, *Actes* the 3. Chapter and 21. verse, and like good ground *to fructifie*, *Mark* the the 4. Chapter. *To search*, is not an idle, but an earnest inquiry: to *search with lights*, *Zophany* the first Chapter, to *looke into hearts and reynes*, *Psal* the 7. into euery cranny and corner, very narrowly. To *receiue readily*, argues a *willing minde*; to *search dayly*, an *industrious spirit*: to *search for to learne*, an *humble, and an honest heart*. The summe of all then, is this, The best Nobles inakes best account of the *Gospell of Christ*: they heare it with a glad heart, they study it, to amend their liues by it; they say vnto it, as *Elisba* said vnto *Elias*, I will not forsake thee, and with noble *Iosua*, they meditate in it, day, and night. Let your Lordships therefore bee pleased to giue me leaue (as *Peter* speaketh in his second Epistle and third Chapter) to *stirre up, and warme your pure mindes*, and though you haue knowledge, yet to put you



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in remembrance of these duties. If you care to be in the number of those who are *the best*: If you tender the continuance of that Honour which the Lord hath already powdered vpon you; or expect any future access thereunto (as *Hierome* sayd to *Salutina*) *Semper in manibus sit diuina lectio, Let the word of GOD dwell in you aboundantly.* Persist in honoring the highest *with your hearts*, by giuing glory vnto him *with your liues*, by adorning his doctrine *with your countenance, and riches*, by encouraging the practises and profession of pietie: and as when the Lyon roareth, the beasts of the Forrests doe tremble and quake; so when the Lyon of the Tribe of *Iuda* speaketh (though but by a meane messenger) you that be of his Court yeeld him reuerence. These be the paths beaten by the noblest Christians: in these standeth the whole duty of *men most honorable*: vpon performance whereof, and no condition els, the Sonne of GOD himselfe made challenge to the glory of his Father, *Iohn* the 17. Chapter and 3. verse, *I haue glorified thee on earth, and now glorifie me with thyselfe in heauen.* Blessed be the GOD of glory, who hath bedecked this Land with such *glorious lights*,  
so



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so many *noble Christians*: and if that *Kingdom be happy, whose King is the sonne of Nobles*, Eccle. the 10. Chap. and 17. vers. then assuredly great is our happines: hauing in the *middest of Nobles*, so *Noble a King*, in all kinds of *Nobility*, *Noble by nature*: a King, not by election, but by birth, descended from a most ancient, and matchlesse famely. *Noble by fortune*, hauing his lap filled with all her fauours: being owner of Kingdomes, Countries, and Cities, wealthy and populous, which adds a splendor, and Maiesty vnto him. *Noble morally*, possessed with heroicall vertues, and beawtified with a true Idea, of a princely minde. *Diuinely Noble*, the Defender of the true faith; who is the Sonne of *Adam*, who is the Sonne of *G O D*. *Noble by an exact conspiracy of all kindes together*. Whose *spirituall*, and *immortall seed*, is Nobilitie from Heauen: whose *Materiall*, is Nobility from Nature, whose *immediate forme*, is nobilitie of manners; whose *instrumentall* and *externall fulgor*, is nobility of Fortune. This is the most perfit, and most rare *Nobility* in the world, shining in some fewe Christian Princes and Nobles, from *G O D*, *Nature*, *Vertue*, *Fortune*.

The

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The Lord blesse your *Royall Maiesty*, that as you haue receiued the word from your youth, so you may defend the faith with constant resolution, and loue the Gospell vnto your liues end. The Lord blesse all your *Nobles*, that as they be by their best title, (*Christian*) so their *fruites* may be euer answerable to their calling. The Lord blesse the *worthy Prince*, with the rest of the *young* and *Honorable Branches* of this Land: and make them know, that if *Angels* fall, they become *Princes* of darkenes; that if *young Nobles* degenerate, they become the *common calamities* of their Countrey; that they are as so many *Lucifers* fallen from Heauen. The Lord for his mercies sake blesse *vs all*, that hauing God to our Father in this life, we may raigne with Father Sonne and Holy Ghost in the life to come.

*Amen.*

FINIS.

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